

Agency Information

AGENCY : HSCA
RECORD NUMBER : 180-10084-10094
RECORD SERIES : NUMBERED FILES
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 007348

Released under the
John F. Kennedy
Assassination Records
Collection Act of
1992 (44 USC 2107
Note). Case#:NW
54756 Date: 10-31-2017

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : DOD
FROM : KESTER, JOHN G.
TO : BLAKEY, G. ROBERT

TITLE :

DATE : 04/20/1978
PAGES : 3

SUBJECTS :

DOD
NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER
KENNEDY, JOHN; AUTOPSY
HURT, JOHN DAVID

DOCUMENT TYPE : LETTER
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified
RESTRICTIONS : 3
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 01/31/1996

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : Copy attached. Box 141.

JFK Routing Slip

007348

NO.

DATE APR 21 1978

Incoming

Document I.D. OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE

INDEX

Kester, John
Hurt, John David
Navy Camera

COPY TO

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- Charlie Mathews
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Special Instructions:

Form #2



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. . 20301

April 20, 1978

007348

THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT

G. Robert Blakey, Esq.
Chief Counsel and Director
Select Committee on Assassinations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Bob:

Attached are two fact sheets in reply to your letters of March 13, 1978, and March 27, 1978, concerning information on John David Hurt and the Navy camera used during the autopsy of President Kennedy.

As your office has previously been informed, all the information requested in fourteen letters sent by you between December 27, 1977 and April 7, 1978 has been made available for review at this Department--with the exception of a few items where further information has been requested to permit completion of the search.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John G. Kester".

John G. Kester

Attachments

Fact Sheet on John David Hurt Request

In a letter dated March 13, 1978, the Defense Department was requested to provide any documents it has on a Mr. John David Hurt of Raleigh, North Carolina. Subsequently the House Select Committee staff informed the Department that Mr. Hurt was a member of the Army Counterintelligence Corps during World War II.

The computerized index to the files in the National Personnel Records Center indicates that a John David Hurt, SSN 107-05-5407, born May 12, 1909, River Bend, Colorado, enlisted in the Army on November 5, 1942, and was discharged on December 28, 1945. His Army Service number was 14180986. The personnel file on Mr. Hurt, to which this index entry pertained, was destroyed in the July 1973 fire at the Center that destroyed 16.5 million files on Army personnel who served before 1960. The Defense Department has found no other information on Mr. Hurt. If he served in Army intelligence, he would have had an intelligence dossier on him, but such a file would have been destroyed before now: files of this sort containing derogatory information on the subject of the file are destroyed after 25 years; files without derogatory information are destroyed after 15 years.

Although the Defense Department has no further information on Mr. Hurt, it may be able to aid the Committee in verifying certain facts concerning Mr. Hurt's service in the Army. If he served in Army intelligence, Mr. Hurt would have been provided a badge number. If he can remember this number, the Army could search its records of intelligence badges issued and try to verify the fact. Also, if Mr. Hurt can remember the units to which he was assigned and the places where he served, Army files could be checked to determine whether the units he mentions were assigned to the places he mentions at the times he mentions. Neither of these avenues of inquiry, however, would turn up any new evidence on Mr. Hurt.

Fact Sheet on March 27, 1978 Letter

This is in regard to the Committee's request for the Navy camera used during the autopsy of President Kennedy at the National Naval Medical Center on 22-23 November 1978. Based on information provided to Ms. Judy Miller by the Select Committee staff as to the location of Navy documentation pertaining to the autopsy camera and lens, a thorough and diligent search was conducted of the files at the National Naval Medical Center, and the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Unfortunately, these additional efforts have failed to reveal any records stating the identity or location of the camera and lens in question.

It is presumed that the camera previously provided to the Committee was the camera used at the autopsy; the camera was described in a previous Committee request as a 4 x 5 Graphic View type, and the camera provided to the Committee was the only one of that description in use at the National Naval Medical Center in 1963. The lens provided to the Committee is a standard lens that was in use at the Medical Center in 1963. Although other lenses were also in use at the Medical Center during that time they have been replaced. Furthermore, no records have been located that indicate specifically which lens was used during the autopsy, nor does the Navy hold any records pertaining to the film holders used for the autopsy photographs. It is likely that those holders have been replaced due to normal wear and tear.